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EMPLOYMENT AND MINING IN QUEENSLAND, NEW SOUTH WALES AND WESTERN AUSTRALIA

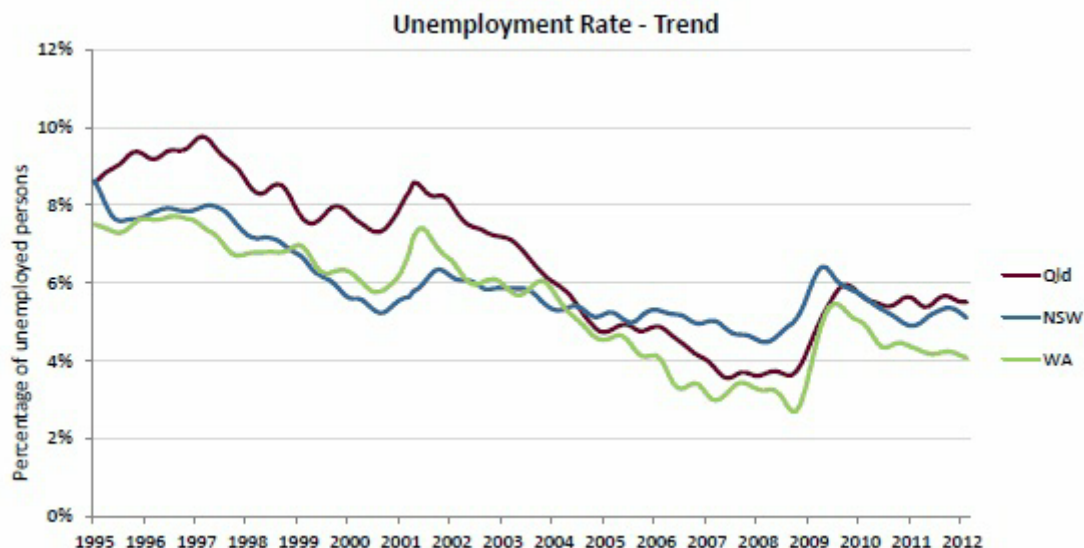
INTRODUCTION

Queensland (Qld) and Western Australia (WA) are known within Australia as 'mining states' for the large contribution mining investment makes to those states' economies. New South Wales (NSW), Qld and WA are the three states with the highest levels of employment in the mining industry. In each of these three states, the unemployment rate sits lower than it has over much of the past 15 years. The low unemployment rates coincide with a decrease in the percentage of people employed in trade-exposed export industries ([footnote 1](#)) and an increase in the size of the mining industry as an employer, as well as an increase in the percentage of people employed in professional, administrative, public and health industries.

While the three states examined are linked by mining, the level of employment in each state varies considerably across industries. Employment levels in NSW, being the most populace of the three states, tend to be more evenly spread across all industries, and remain consistent over time. Western Australia has comparatively high levels of employment in mining and related industries ([footnote 2](#)) and correspondingly lower levels of employment in trade-exposed export industries. Employment levels in WA also tend to be more erratic when compared to NSW. Queensland fits somewhere in between, but historically, is more closely comparable to NSW than WA.

THE UNEMPLOYMENT RATE

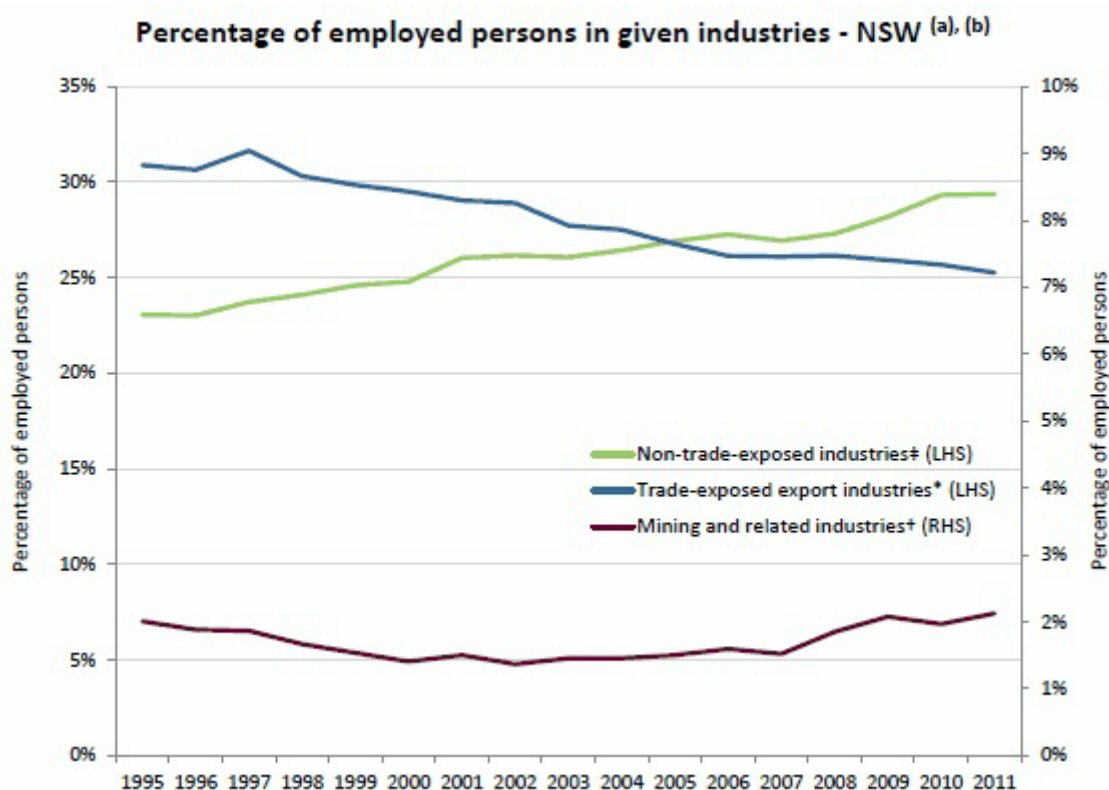
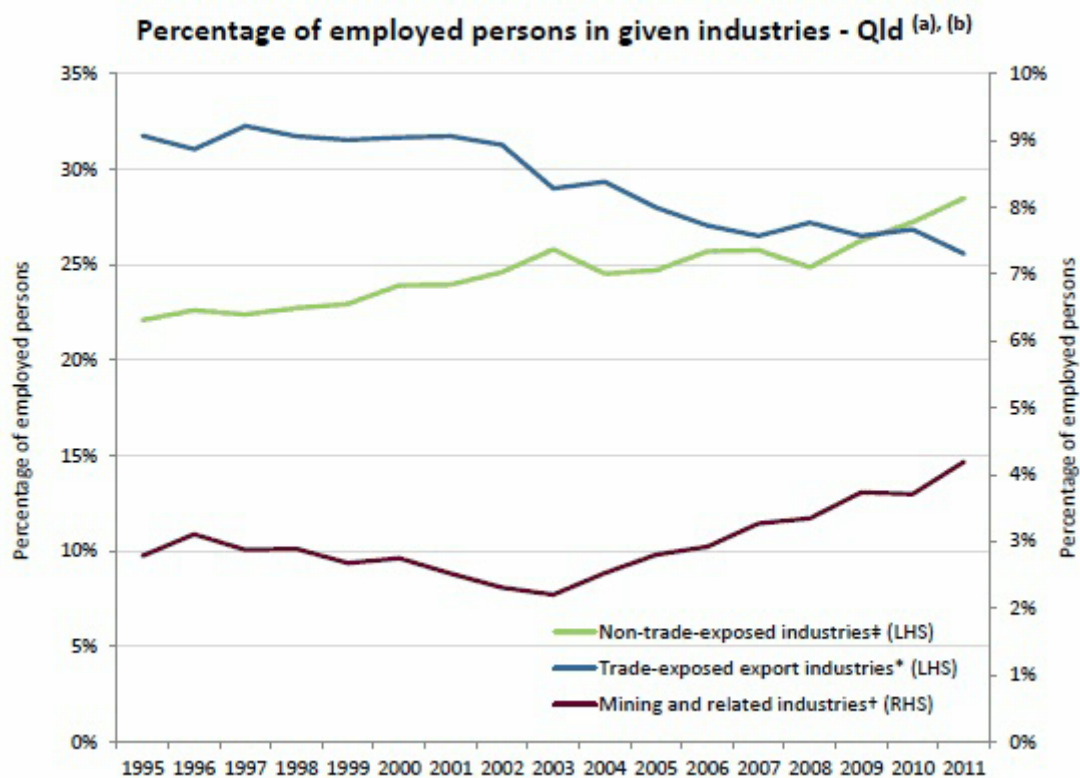
The trend unemployment rate in each of NSW, Qld and WA is currently between 3 and 4.3 percentage points (pts) lower than it was 15 years ago. In 1997, Qld's unemployment rate was 9.8%, the highest rate of the three states. Queensland's rate of unemployment remains higher than that of both NSW and WA but it has experienced the greatest absolute fall, down 4.3 pts to 5.5%. The rate of unemployment in NSW sits at 5.1%, a decrease of 2.9 pts from a rate of 8% in 1997. Western Australia has the lowest unemployment rate (4.1%) of the three states and has experienced a 3.5 percentage point drop in unemployment since 1997.



EMPLOYMENT TRANSITIONS IN INDUSTRY

In conjunction with a fall in the unemployment rate in each of the three states, a significant shift has occurred in regard to the proportion of employed people across industries. The level of employment in trade-exposed export industries has decreased as a percentage of all people in employment. From 1997 to 2011, the trade-exposed export industries' share of employment, in Qld and WA, reduced 6.7 pts and 4.5 pts respectively ([footnote 3](#)). A similar reduction occurred in NSW: the trade-exposed export industries are 6.4 pts smaller relative to employment for all industries (or less than four-fifths the size they were 15 years ago).





(a) Data for the above graphs reflect individuals' state of usual residence which is not necessarily the same state in which an individual is employed as in the case of interstate fly-in fly-out workers.

(b) Industry classifications are categorised as detailed below. Not all industries are graphed within the graphs above.

* Trade-exposed export industries includes the agriculture, fishing and forestry; manufacturing; accommodation and food services; and education and training industries. Mining and mining related industries are classified separately.

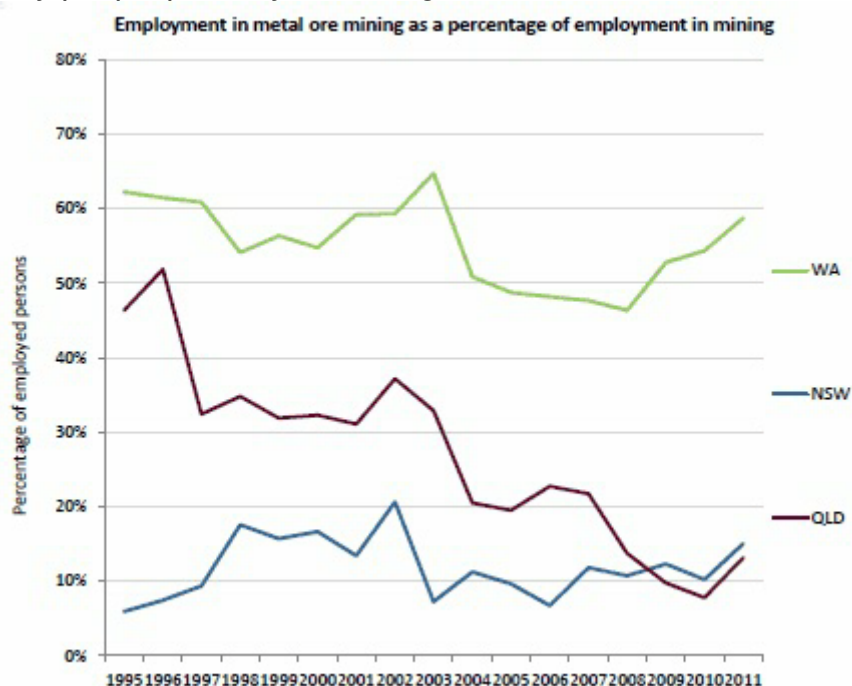
† Mining and related industries includes the mining; rail transport; and heavy and civil engineering construction industries.

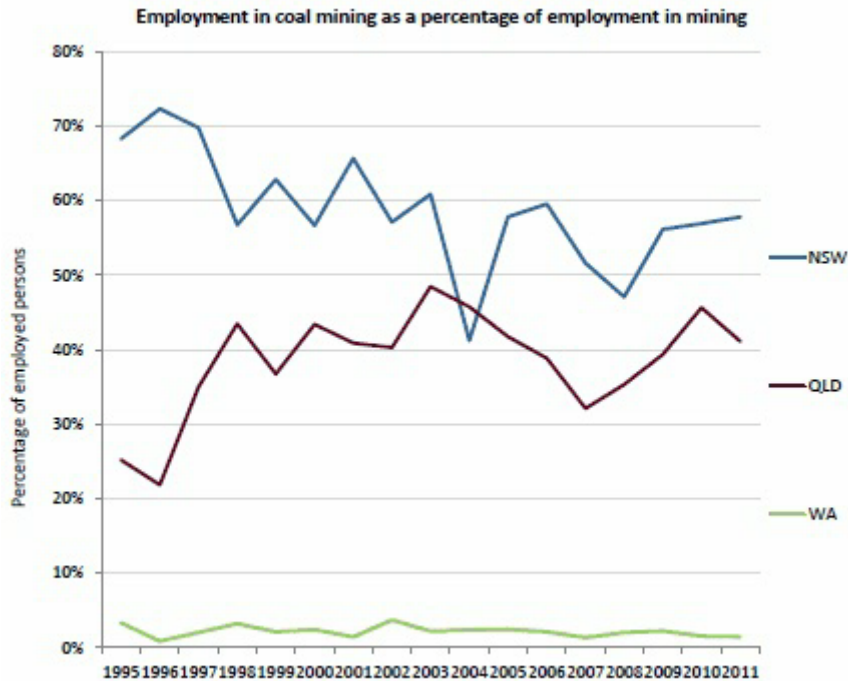
‡Non-trade-exposed industries includes the professional, scientific and technical services; administrative and support services; public administration and safety; and health care and social assistance industries.

Corresponding to falls in the share of employment in trade-exposed industries, Qld and WA have seen significant increases in employment shares in mining and related industries, with the same industries in NSW also experiencing a modest increase in employment share. In 2011, Queensland's mining and related industries employed 4.2% of the employed persons across the state where 15 years ago they employed 2.9%. WA's mining and related industries experienced an even greater growth in their share of employment and are more than twice the proportional size of employer compared to the same industries in other states. The industries employed 8.5% of WA's employed persons, a growth of 174% from 1997 in the proportion of employment.

EMPLOYMENT LEVELS IN MINING - COAL AND METAL ORE

While increases in the percentage of employed persons have occurred in the mining and related industries of NSW, Qld and WA, the makeup of their mining industries is quite different. The majority of mining employees in WA are in the metal ore subdivision, in contrast, the industries of Qld and NSW employ people primarily for mining coal.





MINING'S CONTRIBUTION TO EMPLOYMENT

Investment in the mining industry is important for national and state economies, subsequently, levels of employment in mining and related industries command public attention. In the same period that NSW, Qld and WA have seen a combined proportional increase in mining and related industry employment levels of 44%, the professional, administrative, public and health services industries have seen their share of employment rise 26%. But whereas mining and related industries employ just 3.9% of all employed persons across the three states, the professional, scientific, public and health services industries employ more than seven times as many: around 28.7% of the employed population.

The unemployment rate in the mining states is less than two-thirds of what it was 15 years ago. Fewer people now work in trade-exposed export industries relative to mining, but mining and related industries still employ relatively few people in comparison to the growing professional and service industries and the range of other industries which have had consistent levels of employment over time and which employ the majority of workers in Qld, NSW and WA.

1 The trade-exposed export industries discussed here include the agriculture, fishing and forestry; manufacturing; accommodation and food services; and education and training industries. Mining and mining related industries are classified separately. [<back](#)

2 Mining and related industries includes the mining; rail transport; and heavy and civil engineering construction industries. [<back](#)

3 Figures are derived from averages of four calendar quarters of original estimates. [<back](#)

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